



September 2023

Working together until Metro Richmond is...

TRANSFORMED



God is Like....

At the end of each camp session I sit before our campers on the floor of our Big Lodge and share with them one of our most sacred camp stories: The Legend of the Warm Fuzzy. It's a story about living well together, sharing our special things, and offering words of kindness to each other. At the end of the story, when each child has received their own Warm Fuzzy, I share these sacred words with them: "God Loves You." All of our camp staff and volunteers spend the week doing our best to live out God's love for our campers and we hope that they get just a taste of the vastness of God's love for them through the gentle conversations, nourishing meals, raucous campfire gatherings, and goodnight prayers we share at camp. We hope they've felt God's love at camp and that they take it back home with them.

But we don't just live out God's love at camp, we talk about it, too. Each day, after eating breakfast in the dining hall and doing our camp chores to keep things tidy, our campers gather in their cabin groups for Bible Study. Our goal during Bible Study—like all of our camp activities—is to meet our campers where they are. We do this by asking open ended questions and gently challenging them to wonder about world around them and to claim the spiritual depths inside of them.



What is God Like? (by Rachel Held Evans and Matthew Paul Turner) was our springboard for these deep conversations this summer with our 9-14 year old theologians. The book challenges us to understand God through a series of similes. Understanding God is a life-long pursuit for all of us. In this book, familiar natural images help us build that understanding in accessible ways.

"God is like a river, constant and life giving." "God is like the stars, forever present and bright."

"God is like a fort, strong and secure with walls that are mighty and safe."

"God is like the flame of a candle, warm and inviting. With God close by, you can look to the light and see through the darkest of nights"

"God is like the wind, passionate and full of mystery. God is both here and, mysteriously, also over there."



Above: enjoying campfires and cupcakes

We sat on the bridge above our own camp creek and talked about all the life it sustains for the crayfish, frogs, fish, and even the new ducks that showed up this year. God, too, sustains us. We gazed up at the stars at night and reflected the next morning on how our bright and fiery God is present in them and in us. We built forts out of rocks and sticks and chairs and blankets and talked about times we have felt unsafe and insecure, and how we can take shelter under God.

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PLEASE TAKE NOTE

- 9/4– RCFN Office Closed
- 9/5– RCFN Staff Meeting
- 9/6– Stewardship Meeting
- 9/8– OHBC Movie Night
- 9/12– CAST Meeting
- 9/18– Leadership Development Conference
- 9/19- RCFN Board Meeting
- 9/22– OHBC Movie Night
- 10/9– Camp Alkulana Golf Tournament
- 10/15– RCFN Annual Meeting
- 10/16– RCFN Office Closed

MINISTRY OF THE WEEK SEPTEMBER 2023

- 9/3-- New Canaan Baptist
- 9/10– Oregon Hill Baptist Center
- 9/17– Pine Street Baptist
- 9/24– Rising Liberty Baptist



CAMP ALKULANA GOLF TOURNAMENT

October 9, 2023
 Richmond Country Club
 Sponsors and Teams can Register at
www.alkulana.org

Celebrating Back to School!

The RCFN ministry centers are full of activity as the children in those communities will be heading back to school shortly. We would especially like to thank all of the churches for their donations and time that they contributed to each center and event. The Church Hill Celebration will be on Saturday, August 19th from 10– 2 p.m. Please enjoy some pictures from the celebrations. South Richmond's "In the Neighborhood Block Party" with Gayton Baptist and Friendship Memorial Baptist was a great success, even with the very warm weather!

From below left: Children pick out items at the Oregon Hill Center according to their lists from school. Below right: Visitors to the South Richmond Center choose from the pyramid of backpacks! Right: Rev. Bryon Le Pere cools off in the dunk tank at South Richmond's Block Party



The River City Faith Network expresses their sincere condolences to the families, friends, and congregations on the passing of:

Rob Sanford– River Road Church– BGAV Campus Minister at colleges across Virginia, especially ODU.

Raymond Kee– Second Baptist Church– Faithful supporter of Camp Alkulana along with his wife, Beverly.



RCFN Care & Concern
Congratulations
and Welcome to
Rev. Brian Thomas!

Skipwith Baptist Church is pleased to announce they have a new pastor! Please help welcome Rev. Thomas as he begins his role with the Skipwith faith community.

HELP US REACH THE
2023 ANNUAL OFFERING
GOAL OF \$120,000



RCFN 2023 MISSION OFFERING
\$12,738.02 OF \$100,000.00

HELP US REACH
OUR GOAL!



WWW.RICHMONDBAPTIST.ORG



Training and Events in the RCFN



**LEADERSHIP
DEVELOPMENT
CONFERENCE 2023**
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2023
5:15-8:30 PM

SHALOM BAPTIST CHURCH
8116 WALNUT GROVE RD
MECHANICSVILLE, VA 23111

DINNER, FELLOWSHIP AND SESSIONS TO BENEFIT
YOU AND YOUR CHURCH. REGISTRATION IS
\$15.00 UNTIL 9-4-23
AT [HTTPS://LEADCONF.ORG/](https://leadconf.org/)

Being a Neighbor...Learning from others.

Learn from our friends in the BGAV, MDBA, DBA & RCFN— Wayne Faison, John Sawyer, Win Davis and Maria Lynn

Breakout Sessions include:

“Being a Neighbor...in our racial present.”

- David Bailey

“Being a Neighbor...as a deacon.”

- Deacon ministry beyond the Four Walls- Karl Heilman

“Being a Neighbor...to the end.”

Hospice Care & Education for church leaders and members
– Sheila Stells

“Being a Neighbor...in a diverse world.”

How churches can take the beginning steps to knowing and engaging their diverse neighbors— Erik and Caroline Davidson

“Being a Neighbor...in an emergency.”

Is your church prepared to help its neighbors in an emergency?— Allison Collier, Amanda Lott, Alex Hamp, Bonnie Wilmoth

“Being a Neighbor...outside the walls.”

Small groups outside the walls— Christy Foldenauer

“Being a Neighbor...safely.”

Safety in churches— Deputy Barry Bland

Virginia Church Library Association

Fall Conference Saturday, October 21, 2023
8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at North Run Baptist Church
2100 Lydell Drive, Richmond, VA 23228

Information and Registration at
vacla.org

God is Like....(continued)

We took flashlights into deep, dark caves and practiced sharing that comforting light with each other, illuminating the pathway out. And we built wind catchers with sticks and leaves and string. We watched as the wind blew bits of nature around, and knew that God was in it.

Toward the end of the summer I began keeping my own list of reminders about what God is like.

“God is like a camper, full of excitement and love and fear and sadness, all at once.”

“God is like a camper’s parent, loving, trusting, and hopeful.”

“God is like a camp cook, providing sustenance when we need it.”

“God is like a camp nurse, giving healing care and gentle comfort.”

“God is like a camp craft leader, teaching us to find the creative forces within us.”

“God is like a camp counselor, ever-present, self-sacrificing, the very definition of love-in-action.”

“God is like the many churches and supporters who make camp happen each year, generous, dedicated, and persistent.

Thanks be to God. And thank you to each of you who played a role in providing space for the 212 campers who camp this summer and not only enjoyed their time at camp, but also grew to understand God more fully.

-Beth Wright, Camp Alkulana Director



Pictured above: Campers explore the creek, above right: exploring the sky through a kaleidoscope. Below right: the warm fuzzy

River City Faith Network
Richmond Baptist Association
2828 Emerywood Parkway
Richmond, VA 23294
Phone: 804-329-1701
office@rbaonline.org
www.richmondbaptist.org

Electronic Service Requested

*Working together until
Metro Richmond is...*

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Permit No. 3022



Get ready for the 2023 RCFN Annual Meeting!

You can find the latest information on the website at www.richmondbaptist.org. Look for the Events tab titled Annual Meeting.

Your church should elect your messengers. They represent your church, vote on RCFN business, and bring information from the Annual Meeting to share with your congregation. Contact our office if you have questions.

Our office will mail details about the meeting to each church including your messenger and RSVP directions and post the information on our website.

You may register for the Annual Meeting on our website. Please Call 804-329-1701 ext: 101 or e-mail office@rbaonline.org with any questions or for more information.